[Document H.]

BY THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES,
January 28, 1858.

Read and ordered to be printed.

By order,
J. W. CLAYTON, *Chief Clerk.*

MEMORIAL

OF THE

BOARD OF MANAGERS

OF THE

HOUSE OF REFUGE.

PETITION.

To the General Assembly of Maryland:

The Board of Managers of the House of Refuge for Juvenile delinquents, respectfully ask leave to present to your honorable body that, by the Act, Ch. 288, passed March 8th, 1856, the annual sum of ten thousand dollars, for the term of five years, was appropriated "for the aid, benefit and support" of said Institution. This sum was less than was asked for, and was known to be necessary for the purpose, but the board accepted the donation gratefully.

After many and painful struggles, the Board succeeded in being able to open the house for the reception of inmates, December, 1855. All this was effected without receiving one cent from the State treasury, although the Refuge is emphatically a State Institution, represented in its Board of Managers, by appointees of the State. Children from every county, by law, being made receivable, an annual report of their condition, to your honorable body, being required, and its object being essentially one in which the whole commonwealth is most deeply interested, and upon the soundest principles of public economy. The former reports of the Board, have presented this point to the attention of the Legislature more largely than it is now intended to do, but it may be briefly said, that the delinquents placed by statute under our guardianship, are members of the State. As minors, it is true, that they are not yet entitled to the privileges of the adult, but they are nevertheless a part of its citizenship, and have a claim upon the care of the State; it is on this plea that we ask for them the protection and support of the public authorities, and then, when by a practical recognition of this plea, these delinquents are placed under proper restraints, and by secular and moral instruction and employment and discipline, and thus reclaimed from their habits of vice and crime—the State receives the benefit, inasmuch as society is made more secure in its peace and property, while, at the same time, the supply of the jail and penitentiary, is cut off at the very fountain head, and thus the cost to the State as a mere matter of dollars and cents, is lessened to a degree that few appreciate.

In Massachusetts, where statistics are more carefully collected than in any other State, we gather the fact that, for a term of five years, the cost of crime for prosecution and confinement, was $1,393,379. Thus over one million and a quarter of dollars was spent for the *punishment* of crime. Another estimate is made, that the cost of each boy sent to prison, is from $250 to $500, with the only result that, at the expiration of his sentence, he is turned out to commit new depredations on society, and swell up new costs for his imprisonment. Now, the object of the Refuge is not to punish but to *reform*. This we desire to be kept always distinctly in view. The whole theory of the Institution, is the practical, common sense belief that it is better to *prevent* than to *punish* crime. The Refuge does this most effectually, and at a comparatively cheap cost. In the seventeen institutions represented in the National Convention of Reformatory Institutions, held in New York, in May last, statistics show that the whole number of inmates that had been under their charge since their first organization, was 20,658, of whom seventy-five per cent. were reformed, and all this at an average annual cost of $97.83 per head, and that this reform has been generally effected on an average of two years detention. These facts are incontrovertible.

Set aside, however, the pecuniary cost. Look deeper into this matter, and with the eye of humanity. Look at the education and the christian instruction imparted, the discipline and self-reliance taught, and the reclamation of these little vagabonds and children of neglect. Look at them converted into good citizens and useful members of society, and who can estimate the true value of these Reform Schools? Their results are far beyond human computation. God alone can judge of their inestimable worth.

But the Board, in conclusion, only desire to say that standing for the State *in loco parentis* to these young delinquents, they consider themselves as entitled to all the consideration of creditors upon the public treasury. What means we have to commence the work of the current year, will be exhausted by the first of April, leaving, for our only resource, for the remainder of the year, the quarterly instalments of $2,500 of the appropriation of 1856 before referred to. The average number of inmates last year was 181—the cost of their maintenance, was $19,421 40, or at the daily rate of 29 cents per head. For a more extended exposition, the Board would refer to their annual Report, but these few data here given, are sufficient to show what are their requirements. To the State we must look for an increased appropriation to meet the balance of our wants.

The Board have no debts or liens, or mortgages, nor can they consent to change their determination made at the very outset of their administration, to make no debt that cannot be met by an

available certainty of means. If they fail in these means, then the doors of the Refuge must be closed, and the house be emptied even of its present inmates. Most fervently do they pray that so lamentable a result may be averted. The State can stay the blow by a just consideration of this memorial, if it do not, then what is now the pride and honor of the State and its metropolis, will be made its shame, and the noblest edifice in Maryland will stand as a monument of disgrace.

Respectfully submitted,

G. BROWN, *President.*

J. J. GRAVES, *Secretary.*

Directors on the part of the Subscribers are :—George Brown, Charles F. Mayer, Charles D. Slingluff, Benjamin Deford, B. A. Vickers, John J. Graves, J. I. Cohen, Thomas Wilson, William Baker, J. G. Hamner.

On the part of the City—Charles M. Keyser, Th. M. Abbott, W. H. Beam, Samuel Duer, E. A. Greenway, Jr., Geo. A. Davis, A. Fuller Crane, Franklin Wilson, J. T. Mitchell, G. Raborg.

On the part of the State—William Fisher, Baltimore County; J. M. Geyer, Frederick City; Geo. Schley, Hagerstown; R. Pennington, Cecil County.

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